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Letter dated 29 July 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Singapore to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

On behalf of the 51 delegations listed below, I have the honour to request that the attached joint statement be circulated as an official document of the substantive session of 1998 of the Economic and Social Council, under agenda item 14 (g):

Islamic State of Afghanistan, People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Commonwealth of the Bahamas, State of Bahrain, People's Republic of Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Kingdom of Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, People's Republic of China, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Arab Republic of Egypt, Republic of Ghana, Republic of Guyana, Republic of Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jamaica, Japan, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, State of Kuwait, Lebanese Republic, Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Kingdom of Morocco, Union of Myanmar, Federal Republic of Nigeria, Sultanate of Oman, Pakistan, Republic of the Philippines, State of Qatar, Republic of Korea, Rwandese Republic, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Republic of Singapore, Republic of the Sudan, Republic of Suriname, Kingdom of Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, Republic of Yemen and Republic of Zimbabwe.

The representative of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan will be introducing the enclosed joint statement when the general segment of the Economic and Social Council considers the report of the Commission on Human Rights on its fifty-fourth session.

(*Signed*) Karen **Tan**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

98-22260 (E) 300798

Annex

Joint statement on the question of the death penalty

Islamic State of Afghanistan, People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Commonwealth of the Bahamas, State of Bahrain, People's Republic of Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Kingdom of Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, People's Republic of China, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Arab Republic of Egypt, Republic of Ghana, Republic of Guyana, Republic of Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jamaica, Japan, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, State of Kuwait, Lebanese Republic, Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Kingdom of Morocco, Union of Myanmar, Federal Republic of Nigeria, Sultanate of Oman, Pakistan, Republic of the Philippines, State of Qatar, Republic of Korea, Rwandese Republic, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Republic of Singapore, Republic of the Sudan, Republic of Suriname, Kingdom of Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, Republic of Yemen and Republic of Zimbabwe.

We would like to place on record our disassociation from Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/8 on the question of the death penalty, as contained in the report of the Commission on Human Rights on its fifty-fourth session (E/1998/23), for the following reasons:

(a) There is no international consensus that capital punishment should be abolished. Article 6, paragraph 2, of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states that "sentence of death may be imposed only for the most serious crimes". This view was also reflected in the joint statement contained in document E/1997/106, in which 34 delegations disassociated themselves from a similar Commission on Human Rights resolution (resolution 1997/12) and the joint letter contained in document E/CN.4/1998/156, in which 51 delegations expressed their reservations prior to the adoption of Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/8;

(b) Capital punishment has often been characterized as a human rights issue in the context of the right of the convicted prisoner to life. However, this must be weighed against the rights of the victims and the right of the community to live in peace and security;

(c) The question of whether to retain or abolish the death penalty should be carefully studied by each State, taking fully into account the sentiments of the people and the state of crime and criminal policy. It is inappropriate to make a universal decision on this question or to propose such action in the forum of an international organization.